

RED ALERT!

Last week thousands fled as volcanoes on opposite sides of the world blew their tops



HOLY SMOKE! Guatemala's Pacaya volcano in action



DEADLY CLOUDS Fleeing Filipinos wore protective masks

GLOWING RED LAVA SHOT straight into the sky. A towering cloud of smoke and ash stretched miles high. About 200 miles from the Philippine capital of Manila, Mayon Volcano was erupting. On February 24 it exploded 14 times!

Two more blasts followed on February 28 and yet another on March 1. The eruptions from the Philippines' most active volcano sent lava racing down its 8,100-foot slopes. Hot rocks and brownish-gray ash as much as two inches thick landed on nearby towns. More than 83,000 people within the five-mile danger zone fled to evacuation centers, mostly schools.

As Mayon Volcano blew its stack, farmers raced to harvest and protect their crops. A haze of ash made it hard to see or breathe. The dusty ash "is everywhere," said

Pedro Oribiana, a village chief.

The heavy ash killed fish and destroyed rice fields. It shorted out power lines, leaving thousands of villages without electricity. According to Cedric Daep, a disaster-management official, 49 villages are threatened by superheated clouds of debris that burn objects in their path.

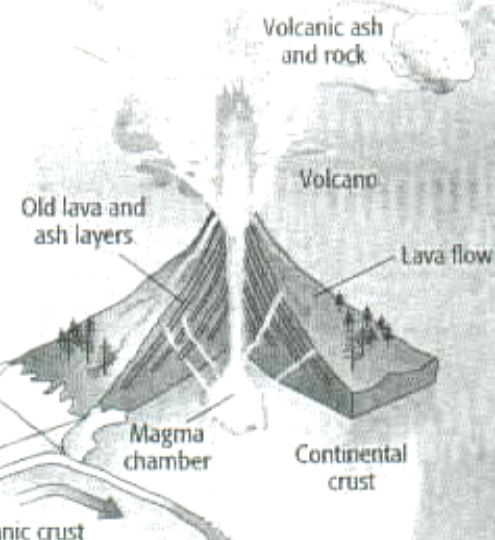
In its deadliest eruption, in 1814, Mayon Volcano killed 1,200 people. Filipino scientists warn that fierce eruptions may continue for weeks. U.S. officials promised to set up tent cities and provide clean water for refugees.

8,371-foot Pacaya volcano sprayed ash over neighboring villages in its second eruption this year. Dozens of families near the crater had to flee.

Luckily, volcanologists can listen to early rumblings from volcanoes and warn people living nearby to get out of the way.

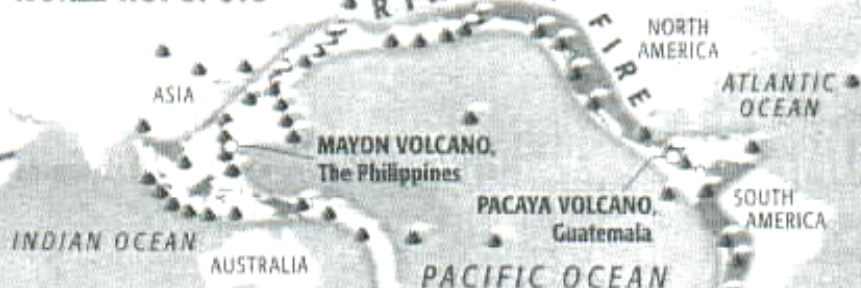
—By Laura C. Girardi

HOW A VOLCANO WORKS



Volcanoes like Mayon erupt when the rocky crust under the ocean shifts downward, carrying water under the volcano. Water-laden magma—melted rock—erupts from the magma chamber.

WORLD HOT SPOTS



Many volcanoes rim the Pacific Ocean, forming the famous "Ring of Fire." They sit on an unstable part of the earth's crust. Its motions cause new eruptions.